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THE TRIPLE WEDDING;

OR,

THE FORGING OF THE RING.

A PLAY, DESIGNED FOR A SMALL COMPANY,

BY

CHARLES BARNARD.

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THE TRIPLE WEDDING;

OR,

THE FORGING OF THE RING.

A PLAY, DESIGNED FOR A SMALL COMPANY.

By Charles Barnard.

CHARACTERS.

Clara Sturgis—leading lady.
Cecely, } —her younger sisters.
Salome, }
Monday Greenfield—a self-made man.
Theopulus Vesuvius Fogge—a lawyer from Australia.
Frederick Daudle—an unfledged author.
Ceifton Muddle—a would-be lawyer.
Servant.

SCENE.

The United States at the present time.

ACT I

THE TRUST.

SCENE. A plainly furnished lodging-room in a city tenement. Old table and three cane-chairs. Some coarse sewing materials and lamp on table. Entrances first right and left, and at back.

TIME. Night in winter.

[*Curtain discovers* SALOME *and* CECELY STURGIS *seated by table sewing. Both plainly dressed.*]

SALOME *(wearily)*. Oh, I'm so tired. I hate poverty. I'd give anything or do anything to be rich.

CECELY. It is not much we can give. Nobody cares to marry a poor girl.

SALOME *(shivers as if cold)*. Get my shawl, deary. It's dreadfully cold here.

CECELY. You forget, sister; we ate the shawl for breakfast. Clara sold it yesterday, and the money paid for our milk and oatmeal. It was a rather thin diet, in spite of its origin. I called the oatmeal the shawl, and the milk the trimmings. It was a pity you had a square shawl, for the meal did n't go round.

SALOME. What do you mean?

CECELY. Why, sister Clara had no breakfast.

SALOME. No breakfast—nothing to eat?

CECELY. Not a thing. She pretended she was n't hungry. She starved herself to help us.

SALOME. Do you think Mr. Greenfield intends to marry Clara?

CECELY *(rises)*. I'd die before I would marry a man called Monday—or take in plain sewing, which is only dying to slow music. *(Earnestly. Takes stage.)* Oh! Everything is put together with a lock-stitch. I can't unravel our seam. I can only sigh *(sings)*. Sigh for a man—sigh for a man——

SALOME. My love!

CECELY *(singing)*. Sigh for a man—sigh for a mansion and a carriage.

[*Enter Clara at back. Appears pale and weary. Very poorly dressed.*

SALOME *(rising, throwing down her work, and kissing Clara)*. Oh, you precious sister—you little mother! To think you had no breakfast.

CLARA. That was a small affair, deary. *(Takes up work.)* Not done yet?

CECELY. There are thirty-two more button-holes to be made yet, and it's nearly eight o'clock.

CLARA *(dropping the work wearily)*. What does it matter? Four cents for a dozen button-holes. *(Bitterly.)* A dozen or two more or less will not help us much? Dearies! The end has come. This is the worst pass we have come to since father and mother died. I paid all I could on account of the rent to-day, and this is our last night here. I have sold everything. No. There is your mother's portrait in the next room. I shall sell that to-morrow, and then —— *(pause)*.

SALOME. I *do* wish our case could be laid before a jury.

CECELY *(to* SALOME). Too much law has made you mad, Salome. Better think less of Mr. Muddle and more of our position. He does n't mean anything. He will never marry a poor girl.

SALOME *(with spirit)*. You need n't edit me, Cecely Sturgis. I dare say your Mr. Daudle's intentions are like his books—not published yet.

CLARA. Oh, girls! How can you! Neither of the young men who call on you are able to marry, and I sometimes have grave doubts of their sincerity.

SALOME and CECELY *(indignant)*. Oh! Oh!

[*Enter slatternly servant at right.*

SERVANT *(laying cards on table)*. Two men to see yez. [*Exit* SERVANT *R.*

CLARA *(reading cards)*. Mr. Daudle and Mr. Greenfield. *(Pleased.)* My dears, the natural man has a

weakness for good clothes. I go to put on such gorgeous raiment as my poverty permits. [*Exit left.*

SALOME *(inspecting her dress — to* CECELY). Do you think that darned place in my skirt will show?

CECELY *(horrified)*. Oh! Oh!

SALOME. Mercy! What have I done?

CECELY *(laughs)*. Nothing, you dear innocent. The natural depravity of the English language is too much for you — that 's all. [*Exit back.*

SALOME. The spiteful thing! She prides herself on her language just because her lover wants to be an author. I would like to see the thing laid before a jury. [*Exit back.*

[*Enter* DAUDLE *and* GREENFIELD *at right.*

DAUDLE. Literature, sir, is one of the noblest of the professions. I mean to follow it as a business. It elevates the mind, clears the heart, and softens the head.

GREENFIELD. How comes on your new book?

DAUDLE. Well, you see, I have not yet decided on the style in which I shall write. There is the diffusive-didactic style, and the closely-connected-colloquial style. Which do you prefer?

GREENFIELD. A man who means business makes his own style.

DAUDLE. That 's just what Miss Cecely says. She said to me yesterday that, if she (meaning me) had anything to say, she would say it.

GREENFIELD. Then I wonder she (I mean you) don't. It seems to me you are playing a rather sorry game here in calling on these girls when you cannot marry either of them.

DAUDLE *(offended)*. Indeed, sir, and may I inquire what are your intentions concerning these poor girls?

GREENFIELD. I 'm glad you put it that way. They are poor and I 'm well off. I hope to marry one of

them—if she will accept so poor and unfortunate a man as I.

DAUDLE. Your style is paradoxical, at any rate.

GREENFIELD. No doubt. I'll make it clear. They call me Monday Greenfield. I have no other name. I was born of a Drab, on a frosty Monday morning in the Greenfield Asylum. I got the name in derision. I never saw my father or mother. I have an old daguerreotype *(takes out picture)*. There it is. *(Shows it to* DAUDLE.) That is supposed to be my father. The picture was found sewed into the bosom of my mother's dress.

DAUDLE *(looking at picture)*. It looks like Cecely.

GREENFIELD *(takes picture and looks at it)*. I never noticed it before. There is a suggestion of her expression. Quite accidental, of course. *(Puts it away. Takes out letter.)* There is part of an old letter, also found among my mother's effects. No name signed, but it appears to be written by the man who ruined my mother. *(Puts it away.)* I keep it safe. I'm looking for that man. Now, I put it to you. Have I a right, with all my wealth, to seek any girl's hand?

DAUDLE. Yes; you worked your way up from the orphan asylum. Any woman would be glad to marry the richest mill-owner in town.

GREENFIELD. But not Monday Greenfield—the waif.

[*Enter* CLARA *at left. Partly changed dress.*]

CLARA *(bows to* DAUDLE, *and takes* GREENFIELD'S *hand)*. Good-evening, gentlemen. *(To* GREENFIELD.) I'm very glad you have come. *(To* DAUDLE.) Salome and Cecely are in the next room, sewing, Mr. Daudle. Will you find your way to them?

DAUDLE *(moves up)*. Thank you. I came to see Miss Cecely. [*Exit back.*

CLARA *(to* GREENFIELD). Have you learned anything more about these young gentlemen?

GREENFIELD. I hear they have no visible means of support, and depend wholly on their parents. They are not bad or vicious, but merely idle and selfish.

CLARA. I'm glad it is no worse. However, it makes no difference. To-morrow we shall move, and they will not follow us.

GREENFIELD. Why must you give up this comfortable flat?

CLARA. Because I cannot pay the rent.

GREENFIELD *(takes her arm)*. Now, Clara, this has gone far enough. It is time we understood each other. You know my history?

CLARA. I know it well enough to respect you, sir.

GREENFIELD *(earnestly)*. Respect! Can you give me nothing more than respect, Clara ——?

[*Enter* SERVANT *abruptly, followed by* FOGGE *at R.*

SERVANT *(to* FOGGE.) That's Miss Sturgis, mister. It's lucky you came to-night, for she has got to clear out to-morrow. [*Exit* SERVANT.

FOGGE. Beg pardon! Any party named Sturgis live here?

GREENFIELD *(presenting* CLARA.) This is Miss Sturgis, sir. Can we be of service?

FOGGE *(staring at* CLARA. *Aside)*. Found at last. *(To* CLARA.) You have your Uncle's nose. Important point in the case. Your father's name was John? Your mother was a Mann?

CLARA. My mother's name was Anna Elizabeth Mann. Mann with two n's.

FOGGE *(takes off things and sits)*. Just so. I'm glad of it. Excuse me if I take a chair. I've traveled fifteen thousand miles, and broke my leg, and been shipwrecked on a desert island for six months, and all for the sake of seeing you. I call it deep devotion.

GREENFIELD. It is, sir. We rather admire it, and

will be glad to tell you so when you inform us who you are.

FOGGE *(aside)*. Lovers! They'll be married within a week when they hear the news. *(Direct.)* That is important, I admit. I am Theopulus Vesuvius Fogge, Attorney-at-Law, Melbourne, Australia. I knew your uncle, Miss. Tough customer. We called him the American savage. Bless your soul! good at heart—good as gold. Had it, too, in plenty. Made it in sheep.

CLARA. Are you from my uncle, Edward Mann,—my mother's only brother? I hope he is well?

FOGGE. Yes, Miss; he is well—that is, he is better off than ever before. He's dead.

CLARA *(surprised)*. Dead.

FOGGE. Yes, Miss—quite comfortably dead.

GREENFIELD. Excuse me, sir; but your manner of stating the fact is a trifle rough.

FOGGE. Dare say. Dare say. My client was rough. Such fellows generally do the graceful thing by dying. I did not love him; but I agreed to do my duty. He instructed me, the day he died (he died in his boots), to come to America, and find you and give you his property—a little matter of fifty thousand pounds—and here I am. The money is in trust—for his son.

CLARA. His son, sir? I never knew Uncle was married, much less that I had a cousin.

FOGGE *(rises)*. To make the story short, this money is in trust for the boy till the first of next June. If you fail to find him by noon of that day, the money is all yours. I've been more than a year coming half round the world to find you. If you will call one of your servants to show me the way to the hotel, I'll get the proper documents.

GREENFIELD. I'll go with you to the hotel, sir.

CLARA *(to* GREENFIELD). Thank you, Monday. That was kind in you.

FOGGE. Monday! What a queer name!

CLARA *(presents* GREENFIELD). Allow me to present my friend, Mr. Monday Greenfield. He will return with you; and if there are any business matters to be arranged, he will represent me in them. (GREENFIELD *turns to speak to* CLARA.)

FOGGE *(aside)*. I knew they were lovers! *(To* GREENFIELD.) I'm ready, Mr. Sunday. *(To* CLARA.) We shall return in a few moments.

CLARA. I shall be here with my sisters.

FOGGE. Are there sisters?

GREENFIELD. Miss Sturgis has two younger sisters.

FOGGE. The American savage never mentioned them. I dare say they were born after he left home. Have 'em out. I 'd like to see how they stand the shocking news I bring. Fifty thousand pounds and a lost boy. [*Exit* FOGGE *and* GREENFIELD *right.*

CLARA *(solus)*. Thank Heaven! It is not too late. Now that our poverty is at an end I feel its sting. Poor Uncle! He led a sad, wild life, but he made amends at the end. He must have repented. If he has left a child, it shall be found.

[*Enter* SALOME *at back.*

SALOME *(comes down—bitterly)*. I hate it. I hate it. Oh, sister, why are we so poor? Mr. Daudle made fun of my darned skirt.

CLARA *(kisses her)*. Bless you, deary; we are not so dreadfully poor.

SALOME. Anyway, you went without breakfast this morning.

CLARA. I never did like oatmeal. *(Embraces her.)* Oh, you little simpleton! Can't you see how happy I am. Behave with dignity now, while I give you some dreadful news. Your poor—no, your rich Uncle in Australia is dead.

SALOME. Mother's brother, who ran away?

CLARA. Yes. He died more than a year ago, and a man has been here who says Uncle left me a large estate in trust for his son — our cousin.

SALOME. Is n't to be all your own?

CLARA. I believe not. It is for the son; but now that we have one loving relative, we can go to him, and he will help us find a place where we can earn a living.

SALOME *(disappointed)*. Earn a living! I don't want to earn a living. I want a nice house and a carriage, and all that. I think Uncle behaved shamefully, and I *do* wish it could be laid before a jury.

[*Enter* SERVANT *at R.*

SERVANT. Mr. Muddle, to see the ladies.

[*Exit* SERVANT.

CLARA *(to* SALOME). Here 's your judge at any rate.

[*Enter* Mr. MUDDLE *at right.*

MUDDLE *(comes down)*. Good evening, ladies. *(To* SALOME.) Glad to see you, Salome.

SALOME. Oh, Clifton, such jolly news. Uncle has died — I never knew him, you know — and left Clara a lot of money.

MUDDLE *(pleased)*. Indeed! I congratulate you. Have you the legal documents here?

CLARA *(to* MUDDLE). Salome is a trifle hasty, Mr. Muddle. The property is all in trust.

MUDDLE *(dejected)*. Ah, that 's bad — very bad. *(Offers card to* CLARA.) Take my card, Miss Sturgis. You may need the advice of a legal friend.

[*Enter* SERVANT, *who holds the door open R.*

CLARA *(to* MUDDLE). Thank you, sir. I have already secured an attorney. Here comes my Uncle's representative.

[*Enter* GREENFIELD *and* FOGGE. *Exit* SERVANT *at right.*

FOGGE *(comes to table and takes out papers — others gather round — speaks to* CLARA). This thing is very plain. There is your Uncle's will, in his own handwriting. By this document, the sum of fifty thousand pounds is to be paid to you for his son. With this provision: if you do not find the boy by noon of the first day of June, you are to keep all the money. Of course, you are to use all due diligence in searching for the child.

CLARA. I will do my best, you may be sure.

FOGGE. If the boy is found, he is to pay you for your trouble. Your Uncle died a year ago. He thought, I suppose, I should find you within two months, and that would give time for the search. But I slipped and fell, and was laid up three months with a broken leg. When I did start, the steamer lost her screw and drifted about in a dead calm till she ran ashore on a desert island. We spent six months on that island, living chiefly on oysters in all styles, till a ship picked us up and set me down in San Francisco, and here I am with the trust nearly run out. I suppose we need no further proof that you are the right Clara Sturgis?

CLARA. Oh, now I think of it, my mother and my Uncle were twins, and much alike. I have my mother's portrait in the next room. Suppose you look at it!

FOGGE *(rises and leaves papers on table)*. Good idea! Let's see if she looks like the savage as I saw him on his ranch.

CLARA *(moves up)*. Come this way.

[*Exit* CLARA *at back, followed by* FOGGE, SALOME, *and* GREENFIELD.

MUDDLE *(lingering behind and slyly looking at papers on table)*. It's the biggest thing out. *(Tries to read papers)*. Can't make head or tail of it. *(Lays paper down)*. I suppose it 's all straight. Rather fancy I'm in for a good thing.

[*Reënter* GREENFIELD *at back with daguerreotype in his hand, much excited in manner. Does not observe* MUDDLE.

MUDDLE *(aside)*. *(Avoiding* GREENFIELD). Hallo! What 's up? Mr. Monday been drinking?

[*Exit slyly at back.*

GREENFIELD. *(Solus)*. I knew it in an instant. The two portraits are as near alike as a man and woman can be. Ah, the letter! the letter! *(Puts away picture and hastily pulls out letter and compares it with handwriting of will on table)*. It is the same. Every letter is alike. Edward Mann. Edward Mann. Not a bad name, after all. Ah! Then I've found the scoundrel. I am the son—the property is mine. And Clara—my Clara—Cousin Clara. Poor old father. I can forgive him now. Cousin Clara—my Clara—my wife. Ah, here comes the young vampires. They smell the money already. *(Moves to side)*.

[*Enter* MUDDLE *and* DAUDLE *at back.*

DAUDLE. What shall you do now?

MUDDLE. Sail in, of course.

DAUDLE. So shall I. Half a dollar to one cent that I 'll be engaged first.

MUDDLE. Taken. *(Sees Greenfield. Aside.)* Look out! That old cat is on hand. He 'll have the whole boodle, if we don't look sharp.

DAUDLE. Oh, I see him! Darn him!

[*Reënter* CLARA, FOGGE, SALOME, *and* CECELY.

FOGGE *(comes down to table)*. There is nothing more to be done, but to sign the preliminary papers. Ah! Wait a bit. There is one matter on which I must seek legal advice.

MUDDLE *(confidently)*. Perhaps I can help you I am a lawyer.

FOGGE *(looks at him suspiciously)*. Ah! Glad to meet you, sir. It 's only a trifling affair, and I hardly like to trouble you.

CLARA *(presents* MUDDLE*)*. This is Mr. Muddle, a friend of the family. I dare say he can help you.

FOGGE. Ah, thanké. *(To* MUDDLE*)*. Do legal papers have to be stamped in this country?

MUDDLE. No; I believe not. Yes. On the whole, I think they do.

FOGGE. You don't know, sir. You're no lawyer at all.

GREENFIELD. No stamps will be required.

FOGGE. Ah, thanké. *(To* CLARA.*)* You solemnly promise to faithfully carry out the requirements of this testament, and to diligently search for the lost child?

CLARA. I do. *(To* GREENFIELD.*)* You will help me, will you not? With your aid, the boy can be found and restored to his own.

GREENFIELD. *(Hesitating.)* It is just possible the boy does not care for his own.

FOGGE *(to* GREENFIELD*)*. Don't be a fool, man. The poor little devil may be dying to find this pretty girl with a pot full of money. Of course, you will assist in hunting up the little wretch.

GREENFIELD. It will be useless. The boy will never be found.

[CURTAIN. END OF ACT I.]

ACT II.

THE SEARCH.

SCENE. A country boarding-house. Room opening at back on piazza with view of garden. Room neatly furnished. Table at center covered with papers. Doors open at back. Entrances first, right, and left and back.

TIME. First of June, in the morning.

[*Curtain discovers* CLARA *at table looking over papers. Her hat on table near by. Summer dress.*]

CLARA. Where can the wretched youngster be? He's a most troublesome child. I cannot find him.

Inquiries, advertisements, detectives, everything in vain. *(Takes up old letter.)* Here is the only clew. She lived in this village at one time. The records of the village church tell me she was married here — and perhaps she died here.

[*Enter* SALOME *at back in walking suit.*

SALOME. Why do you worry over those wretched papers? You would drag us up to this poky place, and what have you found?

CLARA. I have found that Uncle really married the boy's mother, and that is something.

SALOME. You have n't found the boy. Mr. Greenfield was right. He said you would never find him; and to-day is the first of June.

CLARA. It makes no difference. I shall not give up the search. While I live, I shall think of the money as his.

SALOME *(comes nearer)*. Mr. Muddle is coming to-day, deary; and he wants me to say when it shall be, and I 've turned and turned my things until they are quite worn out.

CLARA. I cannot help you, sister. Mr. Greenfield and Mr. Fogge both said I might use some of the money for our support while we kept up the search. I can give you no more money.

SALOME *(angry)*. You 're a little goose, Clara. Don't I tell you Mr. Muddle says the money will be legally yours to-day?

CLARA. I shall never think of the money as mine till I find the boy or his grave.

SALOME *(takes stage, angry)*. You 're a — a hateful thing *(begins to cry)*. Mr. Muddle will soon be here, and you know my hat is — is perfectly — perfectly disgraceful. You 're perfectly heartless and selfish — you know my blue serge is — I declare I 've no patience with your finiky notions about duty, and all that rubbish.

CLARA. I dare say not, Salome. You see everything now through legal glasses. I fear, my love, they are a trifle smoky.

SALOME *(at door at left)*. Oh, you — you spiteful thing. Ah, I wish it only *could* be laid before a jury.

[*Exit in a pet at left.*

CLARA *(sadly — sits, and takes up papers)*. Money is decidedly a bitter root. It has brought the first quarrel between sisters. Oh, Salome, if the money was rightfully mine, you should share the last dollar. *(Pauses.)* Why did I not think of that before? If she died here, she may be buried here *(takes up hat, as if to go out)*. Perhaps the sleepers on the hill can tell. I will go and sit among them. If she sleeps there, she may hear me. She must have loved the boy. She must know where he is now. It's just possible she will whisper something in silence to my heart *(moves up)*.

[*Enter* CECELY *at right. Summer suit.*

CECELY. Oh, Clara! Clara! wait a moment. Mr. Daudle will be here in a few minutes. I have just time to run over to the village store. I really ought to have a new sash.

CLARA. I have no money, deary. The expenses of the search have been so great that we really must economize.

CECELY. Why, Mr. Daudle says all the money will be yours to-day.

CLARA. I shall not take it. I shall insist on Mr. Greenfield or Mr. Fogge as trustees of the property. I shall only take enough to live upon till I can find something to do.

CECELY *(angry)*. You're — a little fool, Clara.

CLARA. Sister!

CECELY. I don't care. You're enough to try a saint, and I hate you. [*Exit right, slamming the door.*

CLARA. Poor girls! It is hard for them to be de-

nied everything. Now I will speak — in silence — to the poor sleeper on the hill. [*Exit back.*

[*Enter* DAUDLE *and* MUDDLE *at left in traveling suits.*

DAUDLE. I congratulate you, my boy. This is the last day, and I am glad of it — so is my tailor. The fact is, there is nothing quite so soothing to the finer instincts of my nature as a little ready money.

MUDDLE. Yes, *sir*. The legal aspect of the world is greatly improved by a good financial backing. What do you think she will do for us?

DAUDLE. Oh, she's a good girl and loves her sisters — and so do we. Should n't wonder if she divided the whole plum on the spot.

MUDDLE. Thirds! Give 'em thirds! I never knew how dear my Salome had become to me.

DAUDLE. Well, my Cecely is rather precious, you may bet your bottom dollar. She's a noble girl — sweet-tempered, amiable, and — three into fifty thousand — one and carry two — sixteen thousand pounds.

MUDDLE. A little matter of eighty thousand dollars more or less, if that rascally mill-owner does not put in his oar.

DAUDLE. Never you fear him. His mother had no name. He does not dare to offer himself, with all his money.

[*Enter* CECELY *at right.*

CECELY (*to* DAUDLE). Oh, Frederick! I 'm so glad you have come. I 've such dreadful news. (*To* MUDDLE.) Morning, Mr. Muddle; Salome will be here soon. (*To* DAUDLE.) Just think, Clara refuses to touch the money.

MUDDLE. She must. It is legally hers, and she must be forced to take it.

DAUDLE. This will never do. Where is she? We must appeal to the nobler instincts of her nature.

She has a soft head and a clear heart. She will not turn a cold ear to our despairing cry ——

CECELY. Oh, Freddy! You have such a delightfully liquid style. You 'll be sure to move her. Let us find her at once.

MUDDLE. I fancy, if the legal aspects of the case are laid before her, she will at once consent to divide.

CECELY. Divide? Divide what? *(To* DAUDLE.) What does he mean?

DAUDLE *(to* CECELY). Never mind, dearest. Where's your sister? *(Aside to* MUDDLE.) Don't be a fool and a lawyer, too.

CECELY *(moves up)*. She 's taken her hat. I dare say she 's in the garden. Let 's go find her.

DAUDLE *(to* CECELY). You must n't mind what Clifton says. He has an acute legal mind, but he has no command of style. When we meet Clara, let me do the talking.

[*Exit all at back.*

[*Enter* GREENFIELD *and* FOGGE *in traveling suits at left.*

GREENFIELD. You understand my wishes in the matter?

FOGGE. Perfectly, sir. The money is to be paid to the young lady according to the terms of your father's will just as if the boy had not been found. I 'm sure it is very creditable in you, sir. I wish the old savage could have lived to see his son. Your mother must have come of good stock, sir.

GREENFIELD. We will not speak of her now. I fear she was more sinned against than sinning. *(Looks off.)* Ah! here comes Miss Sturgis, just in time.

[*Enter* CLARA *at right.*

CLARA *(to* GREENFIELD*)*. Oh, Mr. Greenfield. I 'm very glad you have come. I have important news

for you. *(To* FOGGE). Good-morning, sir. You, too, will be interested in the matter. I have one more clew about the lost child.

FOGGE. Just the way! A woman always finds something to upset the best laid plans. Have you found the poor little devil?

CLARA. No; only his mother's grave.

GREENFIELD *(surprised).* Her grave! My mother! *(Trying to recover himself.)* Excuse me. I was thinking of my own mother.

CLARA. You know I came up here because I learned from my father's papers that poor Uncle lived here at one time.

GREENFIELD. I'm glad you came. I was born in this village.

CLARA. Then you know the little cemetery on the hill. I found an old gardener at work there. He remembered my aunt and pointed out her grave. There is a stone there half hid in the grass, and on it are her initials, but no date.

FOGGE. Then the American savage was not quite a brute after all.

CLARA. No, my Uncle was an honorable man. Listen; I searched the register in the village church, and I found——

GREENFIELD *(excited).* What did you find?

CLARA. The date of her marriage. (GREENFIELD *sits by table overcome with emotion.)* (CLARA *concerned.)* Oh, Mr. Greenfield, pardon me; pardon me. It was unkind in me to trouble you with these sad things. Of course, you sympathize with the poor woman. I am glad for the boy's sake that the blot on his mother's name is cleared away. I feel now that I care more than ever for him.

FOGGE *(to* CLARA). Never you mind him, Miss. It's a fearfully hot day, and on the way up we had some—some lemonade—it always affects him. It flew to his head. He can't stand such things—the sugar was too strong.

GREENFIELD *(rises with an effort)*. It is nothing serious. I am perfectly well. I am very happy now—more happy than ever before in my life. Come! Where are your pretty sisters? Call them both. We need their smiles upon our business meeting.

CLARA *(moves up)*. They may be in the garden. I'll call them. [*Exit at back.*

GREENFIELD *(to* FOGGE). You must pardon me, sir; I never knew before that my mother was married. I never knew before where she slept. *(Moves up.)* I must go and see the place.

FOGGE *(going after him)*. No, stay here. The vultures are gathered to the feast. The callow lawyer and the unfledged author are coming. *(Speaks off.)* Welcome, my gentle lovers! I fear you will find two can play at that game.

GREENFIELD. How so?

FOGGE *(aside to* GREENFIELD). What prevents you now from marrying Miss Clara? Good, straightforward girl. Said she cared for the boy, and you are the boy.

[*Enter* CLARA, *followed by* DAUDLE *and* CECELY *and* MUDDLE *and* SALOME. CLARA *to center.* DAUDLE *and* CECELY *to right.* MUDDLE *and* SALOME *to left. Just here the village clock outside strikes twelve.*

FOGGE. There she goes. Twelve o'clock—first day of June and my duty's done. I'm glad you found your sisters, Miss Sturgis. We must have plenty of witnesses when the plot against your happiness is unfolded.

DAUDLE *(aside)*. What the devil does the fellow mean?

FOGGE *(takes out papers)*. The time is up and we will proceed to business. According to the terms of your Uncle's will the money is now yours. (DAUDLE *and* MUDDLE *secretly elated.* SALOME *and* CECELY *openly pleased.)*

CLARA. Oh, no, no! I cannot take it; it belongs to my cousin. I shall some day find him, and then what can I say if I have spent his property?

FOGGE. He would have no legal claim on you. I dare say the old savage guessed the boy would never be found. (MUDDLE *nods approval.)* If he is anything like his father, he has made a fortune of his own by this time.

CLARA *(to* GREENFIELD). What do you think? Shall I ever find him?

GREENFIELD. It seems hopeless. I fear the boy will never be found. (MUDDLE *and* DAUDLE *urge* SALOME *and* CECELY *to go to* CLARA.)

SALOME *(crosses to* CLARA). Take it, deary. Why should you care for this unknown cousin?

CLARA. But I do care for him. I have thought of him day and night, and wished I might find him. Poor, forlorn, little boy! I have begun to love him.

(GREENFIELD *drops his handkerchief or cane with an exclamation, and* FOGGE *coughs significantly.)*

FOGGE *(aside).* Lucky dog! (CECELY *crosses to* CLARA, *and urges her to take the money by signs.)*

GREENFIELD. I think you may take the property. If ever your cousin should want money, you can help him to the full extent of your generosity.

CLARA. Then I will accept. Must I sign any papers?

FOGGE *(offering paper).* Yes; sign here. (CLARA *signs papers and then moves up and speaks to her sisters.* DAUDLE *shakes hands with her and then crosses to left, near* MUDDLE. *Shakes hands with him.* FOGGE *folds up papers.)*

[*Enter* SERVANT *at right.*

SERVANT *(offers letter).* Telegram for Mr. Greenfield. *(Gives it to* GREENFIELD *and then exit R.)*

GREENFIELD *(reads telegram).* Oh! this is too bad—too bad.

CLARA. What has happened, sir? Have you lost anything?

GREENFIELD. I was thinking of my work-people. There are over three hundred of them depending on my mill for a living. The mill was burned down last night. *(To* FOGGE, *aside.)* I suppose I must use a part of the money at once to help my workmen.

FOGGE *(surprised, aside to* G.) Part of the money, sir?

GREENFIELD *(aside to* F.). Why, yes. Part of my inheritance. I have n't a dollar now in the world. (CLARA *and sisters deeply concerned.)*

DAUDLE *(elated. Aside to* M.). The fellow is pretty badly winged.

MUDDLE *(aside to* D.). I 'm devilish glad of it.

FOGGE *(to* GREENFIELD). It is too late. She has signed the papers. She has your money.

CURTAIN. END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

THE WEDDING.

SCENE. A wedding reception room. Time: Night. Entrances first right and left and at back. Piano, if convenient. Rich furniture. Gas lamp on table. Gas bracket on wall that can be easily unscrewed. Coals in hod at fire-place.

[*Curtain discovers* CECELY *and* SALOME *dressed as brides. Song may be introduced here by one of the ladies, if desired.*]

(After song.) SALOME *(taking stage and admiring her dress).* There is something perfectly delicious in a train.

CECELY *(admiring her dress).* A little real satin goes a great way to make life endurable. Do you

think that ridiculous lawyer from Australia will come?

SALOME. I'm more concerned about Clifton. I've a haunting suspicion he wont come. I'm sure if there is a time when a man is really wanted it is at his wedding.

CECELY *(studying her dress)*. I'm so glad the material will turn. It will make a good street dress a year from now, if poor Daudle's book should fail.

SALOME. Oh, I don't bother about money. Clara will take care of us. *(Looks off, R.)* Oh! here come the grooms. *(Enter* DAUDLE *and* MUDDLE, *dressed as grooms, at right.)*

DAUDLE. The occasion is auspicious. I hear some of the guests are beginning to arrive. I feel I ought to write a poem on it.

CECELY *(takes his arm)*. No, sir; none of your poems just now, if you please. You'll be mooning round the house, tearing your hair for a rhyme and nobody will be able to find you. Marriage is prose, and you had better attend to me and let styles go.

MUDDLE *(to* DAUDLE). She's got the law on you, my boy. Better keep quiet.

SALOME *(to* MUDDLE). No special pleading just now. The judge is in the next room and the jury are beginning to assemble. You are up for sentence.

DAUDLE. Suppose we go and see the presents.

SALOME. Yes, do; I'm dying to see what Clara means to give. She said it would be only paper.

MUDDLE *(to* SALOME). It 's a check, my love. Nothing so soothing in the world as a good check.

SALOME. I'll have to check you, sir. Poor, dear Clara will be left here all forlorn, and I do believe she will half beggar herself to help us.

[*Exit all left, laughing and merry.*

[*Enter* FOGGE *at R., in ill-fitting suit.*

FOGGE. I'd rather face the American savage any

day. You know where to find him—but a woman *(pulling at his coat)*. It's the toughest affair I ever got into. The plaintiff—I mean the coat—is too small. No, sir; there is nothing small about the plaintiff. He is too liberal—and if—if the tailor could be quietly hung, it would be better for all concerned. If the defendant was not a woman. *(Looks off, back.)* Here she comes. Poor devil. He meant well—I mean the tailor.

[*Enter* CLARA, *in evening dress, at back.*

CLARA *(offering her hand)*. This is an unexpected pleasure, Mr. Fogge. I thought you intended to sail for home a week ago. I'm glad to welcome you to our double wedding.

FOGGE *(fussing with his coat)*. Thanké, Miss. I'm happy to be here—that is as happy as a man can be with a painful—painful sense of the fitness of things. No, I mean the want of fitness. It is a painful—— *(pulls at coat and it rips)*. There! Now I'm serene. As serene as a man can be with bad—bad news.

CLARA *(alarmed)*. What has happened, sir? Oh, you have news from the boy?

FOGGE. You've said it. Plaguey rough, miserable news. Oh, I wish he had never been born. Excuse me—I meant my tailor. The fact is, Miss Sturgis, I have found the boy. (CLARA *sits, overcome with alarm.)* Bear up, my dear young lady. You must bear up. I assure you the boy is not like his father. He is more concerned about you than you need be about him.

CLARA. Tell me about him. Is he poor? Is he suffering for anything? Poor child. He need not fear me.

FOGGE. Oh, I don't think he does.

CLARA. I will send a carriage for him as soon as the wedding is over. Poor boy. I hope he has good warm clothes this cold weather.

FOGGE *(aside)*. Poor little devil—in a dress-suit. *(Direct.)* I've an idea. Why not send for him now? He's not far away, and I'm sure he would be greatly pleased to see his cousins married.

CLARA *(rises)*. Yes, do. Take a carriage at once, and bring him here. Bring him right to me. Oh, I'm so glad we have found him. Is he a bright boy—a handsome, manly little fellow? I feel I could take him right into my arms and kiss him.

FOGGE *(aside)*. Just what the poor devil would like. *(Direct.)* I'm sure, Miss, this does you the greatest credit. I'll go for the—the heir at once. We'll soon be here. *(Moves to R.)* Keep the supper warm for us.

CLARA. Everything shall wait till you return. Stay a moment. You know why I took the money. Tell him I shall return it all. Tell him I have searched for him, and welcome him. Tell him—no, bring him to me. I'll tell him all myself.

FOGGE. That's the best way. He is a noble, generous fellow, and I really believe he loves you already.

CLARA. Oh, I'm very glad. I shall love him dearly.

FOGGE *(aside)*. I've done it this time. *(Direct.)* Ask the bridal parties to wait. It will do 'em good to meditate on the situation. [*Exit* FOGGE *at right.*

CLARA *(solus)*. Poor girls. I hope they will not be disappointed. *(Takes out two checks.)* I'm very glad I did not give them the presents. The money rightfully belongs to the boy, and he shall have it. Sisters are all right. They have their husbands, and I can easily earn a living *(puts checks in pocket)*.

[*Enter* DAUDLE *and* CECELY *and* MUDDLE *and* SALOME *at back, talking and laughing together.*

CECELY *(to* CLARA). Oh, Clara, the guests are arriving in crowds. I never knew we had so many friends in the world.

SALOME. I 'm sure, when we lived in the Harlem flats not a soul ever came near us.

CLARA. I fear, dearies, we shall have to delay matters for a few moments. There is one guest who has not arrived, and we cannot go on without him.

CECELY *(to* CLARA). I 'm sure, sister, we need not wait for Mr. Greenfield. Frederick says he never goes out now that he has lost his money.

CLARA. I do not expect Mr. Greenfield, though he has been invited to come. He is too busy earning an honest living. The expected guest is your cousin.

SALOME *(surprised)*. Oh, impossible!

CECELY *(startled)*. Well, I never!

DAUDLE *(alarmed)*. Not the lost child?

CLARA. The lost boy and heir of all the property.

MUDDLE. I can't see how he can have the face to appear here. He has n't a shadow of claim on the money. The servants should be instructed ——

CLARA *(interrupts him)*. The servants will welcome him, Mr. Muddle, whether he has a right to the money or not. He is my cousin, and I shall give him the money as soon as he asks for it. *(To* SALOME.) Salome, come with me to the supper-room. Everything must wait. *(To* CECELY.) Cecely, you and Mr. Daudle may remain here till we return.

[*Exit* CLARA, *followed by* SALOME *and* MUDDLE, *both miserable, at back.*

DAUDLE. Well, now. I—I—really, I don't see how we can go on.

CECELY *(sharply)*. What?

DAUDLE. Now, Cecely Sturgis, you need n't take me up in that style. It 's not my fault that the miserable wretch of a boy has been found.

CECELY. Why, who said it was? He 's my cousin, and I dare say he 's a very good little boy. I dare say he knows better than to insinuate such dreadful things.

DAUDLE. I hardly know how to express myself under these trying circumstances.

CECELY *(angry, and begining to cry)*. For mercy's sake, Mr. Daudle, what are you talking about? It will soon be over, and you said only a few moments ago that you enjoyed being married.

DAUDLE. Oh! bother style. Can't you see, Cecely, if this wretched child has been found, he will claim all the money, and Clara, like a fool ——

CECELY *(very angry)*. Like a what, sir?

DAUDLE *(meekly)*. Like a good girl, will give it to him, and then what shall we do?

CECELY. Do? Be married and go to housekeeping.

DAUDLE. Housekeeping! Oh, Lord! I have n't a cent. I thought you — no — Clara — would do the handsome thing.

CECELY. You mean you can't support me, and you want to back out?

DAUDLE *(in despair)*. That 's it, Cecely.

CECELY. Well, sir, you can't back out. The minister is here, and we must go on — if it kills us. *(In changed manner.)* Have n't you a single dollar in your pocket?

DAUDLE. Oh, of course I 've got something. About two hundred dollars, to pay the minister and our wedding-trip.

CECELY. Give the minister ten. I 'll ask Clara to let us stay here to-night, — I never did approve of wedding-trips, — and to-morrow we 'll take what you have left and hire a cheap flat up-town and get a few things. You can write for the papers and I keep house and do the marketing.

DAUDLE *(pleased)*. No, I 'll do the marketing. Of course, we 'll put out the washing.

CECELY. Yes, we 'll put out the washing and I 'll do the cooking and make the ——

DAUDLE *(embracing her)*. Oh, Cecely, what a treasure you are! How could I think of leaving you?

CECELY *(pushing him off and brushing dress)*. Don't crush me. It's a lovely material, and I shall take off the trimmings and use it for a street dress. It will turn beautifully, and I'll make it over for a house dress for next year. We can get a brass-mounted — oh, and I know where to get the kitchen things very cheap.

DAUDLE *(kisses her)*. We shall be very happy, my love.

CECELY. Oh, very — particularly if we get a brass-finished —— *(Sees* SALOME *entering.)* Oh ——

[*Enter* SALOME, *crying bitterly, at back.*

SALOME *(crying)*. Oh! Oh!

CECELY. Mercy, Salome! What is the matter? Have you torn your dress?

SALOME. Oh, Clifton says — says he — he can't — can't support — can't support me. Oh, dear!

DAUDLE. This is infamous. You must appeal to the law, and sue him for breach of promise.

SALOME. Oh, no; I could n't — I would n't submit it to a jury for the world.

[*Enter* MUDDLE, *at back, disgusted.*

CECELY *(to* DAUDLE). My love, let us go see Clara about that matter. *(To* SALOME.) Tell him you love him, you little goose.

[*Exit* CECELY *and* DAUDLE *at right.*

SALOME *(sobbing, to* MUDDLE). You 're a — mean-spirited thing, and I hate you. All you wanted was Clara's money.

MUDDLE. I confess, Miss Salome, I did hope Clara would do something.

SALOME. I think it would be more creditable if you did something yourself.

MUDDLE. I 'm not quite a fool, Salome. I can earn something if I must, but it will be very hard — very hard.

SALOME. Can't you give up cigars and your span and your club?

MUDDLE. Oh, come now! You're hard on a fellow.

SALOME. It's no harder on you than on me. I have n't a dollar, but I can work. I can make my own dresses and copy your law papers — do anything.

MUDDLE *(earnestly)*. Can you make plain cake?

SALOME. I can make bread, sir. I can go without cake and be happy. Beside, I can broil a steak to a turn.

MUDDLE *(kisses her)*. What a treasure you are, my love. I thought you wanted to board.

SALOME. I hate boarding. Housekeeping is much cheaper, beside a boarding-house is horrid for children.

[*Enter* CECELY *at right.*

CECELY. Oh, Salome; the parlor is just packed. Clara says we must go to the library at once and be ready to go on. Oh, Mr. Muddle, Fred and I are going to housekeeping. Is n't it jolly? Fred says he is twice a man already.

SALOME *(takes* MUDDLE'S *arm)*. Just what Clifton thinks. We don't care a penny for the money. Come, it's time to take the fatal leap, and good-bye to girlhood forever. *(Exit all at right.)*

[*Enter* CLARA *at back.*

CLARA *(solus)*. I am sick with apprehension. If the child should prove to be some half-starved, ill-bred youngster, I should die with mortification. *(Looks at watch.)* I hope they will come soon. I can't keep the people waiting much longer.

[*Enter* GREENFIELD *in dress suit at left.*

GREENFIELD *(offers hand to* CLARA). Good-evening, Miss Sturgis. I trust I am not too late?

CLARA *(eagerly)*. Oh, Mr. Greenfield; I 'm very

glad you have come. I have most important news. The boy has been found. Mr. Fogge is to bring him here. I have delayed the wedding till he arrives.

GREENFIELD *(quite cool.)* And how does the news affect you?

CLARA. Oh! I do not care. I'm glad the trust is over. *(Shows checks.)* See, there are two checks; each for a third of the property. I meant to give them to my sisters as a wedding present. Poor girls; I'm sorry for them. *(Gives him checks.)* You take them. Keep them for the boy. I want you to be his guardian.

GREENFIELD *(takes checks).* I'd be delighted to take care of the little fellow. I'm quite accustomed to that sort of thing.

CLARA. What are you doing now? It seems so long since we met.

GREENFIELD *(twisting up checks).* Oh, I'm all right now. I've just come into a very good property.

CLARA. Why, take care; you 'll ruin those checks, and they are valuable.

GREENFIELD *(kisses checks).* Yes, quite precious; and I'm glad of it, for they enable me to say that I have long wished you to be my wife. I am no longer the waif from the asylum.

CLARA. Oh, Monday! you know I always loved you; only this wretched business came between us.

GREENFIELD *(kisses her).* No, it has brought us together.

[*Enter* Mr. MUDDLE *at right, fishing in his pockets in great distress. Looks about on floor.*

MUDDLE *(to others).* Have you seen it anywhere?

CLARA. Seen what? Have you lost anything?

MUDDLE. Yes; it's most awkward. I've lost the ring.

CLARA. Perhaps we can wait while you run out and buy another.

MUDDLE. Buy another! *(Aside)* I have n't a cent with me. *(Searches all his pockets more vigorously.)* I don't know what I shall do!

GREENFIELD *(pulling off his finger ring and holding it in the gas flame)*. Perhaps I can help you.

CLARA. Oh, Mr. Greenfield, you have spoiled that beautiful ring.

GREENFIELD. That 's all right. Look lively, Mr. Muddle. Bring me a coal from the hod. *(Takes off the glass of the table lamp, and runs to bracket on wall and twists off the fixture by unscrewing it.)* Here we are, a blow-pipe and a forge. Give me the coal. *(Takes coal and lays ring in it and uses gas-pipe bracket for blow-pipe.)* Where there 's a will there 's a way. I'll forge a ring for the bride. *(Blows through the pipe and melts the gold. Suddenly drops the bracket and pinches the ring together. To* CLARA.) Your hand; let me try it on your finger. (CLARA *offers her hand and he slips the ring on her finger.)*

CLARA *(pulling at ring)*. Oh, it burns. It wont come off. I can't get it off.

MUDDLE *(suddenly hopping into the air with a cry, and then sitting and pulling off his shoe and taking out ring)*. I've found it.

CLARA *(pulling at ring)*. It wont come off at all.

[*Enter* DAUDLE *and* SALOME *and* CECELY *at right.*

SALOME *(to* CLARA). Sister, Mr. Fogge has arrived. He 's coming upstairs.

CLARA. Oh, then, the boy has come. Dear sisters and brothers, before you go let me present you my future husband. *(Both couples bow rather indifferently.)*

[*Enter* FOGGE *at left.*

CLARA *(surprised)*. Why, where is the boy? I hope he can come.

FOGGE *(pretending surprise)*. I sent him up to you. Have n't you seen him?

CLARA. Sent him here?

FOGGE *(presenting* GREENFIELD). My dear young lady, this is the boy.

CLARA. Oh, my cousin *(laughs)*. I was expecting a child.

FOGGE. And find a husband. Oh! you young folks think you are so sly. Think I did n't see it all the time. I congratulate you both with all my dusty old heart.

CECELY. Really, Clara; we ought to go on. The people will wonder what can be the matter.

GREENFIELD. Wait a moment; I have a duty to the brides. *(Gives each a check)*. There 's a trifle from your cousin to assist you in setting up housekeeping.

DAUDLE. I hardly know in what style to thank you, sir.

GREENFIELD. Oh, never mind style. A man who means business makes his own style.

MUDDLE *(to* GREENFIELD). The legal complications of the case make it difficult for me — for me ——

FOGGE *(interrupting)*. Is your marriage certificate stamped, my son?

MUDDLE. Stamped and sealed with love, sir.

FOGGE. Well turned, my son. You 're more of a man than a lawyer. *(To others.)* Why, bless me! I was invited to a double wedding. Why not make it a triple wedding?

CLARA. Oh, no, no! I could n't think of it. I have not the right dress nor — the ring. Yes *(kisses her hand)*. I have a ring — but I can't get it off. Perhaps it 's a good sign. *(To* GREENFIELD.) Edward, what will the people say?

GREENFIELD. The folks will say it 's perfectly sweet in you.

CLARA *(pulls at ring)*. It wont come off. Never mind. *(Takes Greenfield's arm.)* All 's well that ends in a ring.

FOGGE. Fall in for the procession. Strike up the music. Wedding march.

TABLEAU.

CURTAIN.

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